

Brand journalism: how media organizations behave on Twitter

The presence on Twitter of Flemish public (Studio Brussel, MNM) and commercial (Q-Music, JOE fm) radio channels

Hedwig de Smaele

KU Leuven, Campus Brussels, Belgium

hedwig.desmaele@kuleuven.be

Sophie De Wispelaere

KU Leuven, Campus Brussels, Belgium (2013-2014)

dewispelaeresophie@gmail.com

Gunter Van Stappen

KU Leuven, Campus Brussels, Belgium (2013-2014)

Journalist Digitale Redactie VTM NIEUWS

gunter.vanstappen@gmail.com

ABSTRACT In this paper we analyze the presence on Twitter of four radio channels, both public and private, in Dutch-speaking Belgium (Flanders). A quantitative content analysis of 1003 tweets posted between 1 and 15 April 2013 by four radio channels (Studio Brussel and MNM for the public broadcaster VRT, JOE fm and Q-Music for the commercial broadcaster Medialaan) was combined with three expert interviews with the heads of digital media of Studio Brussel, MNM and JOE fm/Q-Music. The findings show that self-promotion and branding is more important than functioning as a news channel, for public and private channels alike. News is defined in terms of the channels 'core business' which is music news in contrast to general news (with MNM as the only exception). The tone of voice is strikingly positive and touting. Interaction with the audience is the most expressed goal in the interviews but in reality it is often solved with the least possible effort (for example retweeting messages of the audience instead of replying to them). Commercial channels take the interaction with the audience as a form of customer care more serious than do public service channels. Behavior on twitter depends on individuals rather than on organizations or organizational policy, with formal rules less developed for radio than for television. Further research is needed into the twitter behavior of individual journalists. As for the radio channels we can conclude that their tweets are the expression of a hybrid form of journalism, marketing and public relations.

KEYWORDS Twitter, journalism, advertising, branding, radio channels

1. Introduction

The relationship between journalists and Twitter has been extensively researched. Both Twitter as a news gathering tool and as a news dissemination tool has inspired multiple studies. Next to the possibilities also the challenges have gained attention. This study does not focus on *individual* journalists' use of Twitter but on the behavior of media *organizations* on Twitter. Next to the literature on *journalism* and Twitter therefore, also the handling of Twitter within the field of *marketing* adds to the relevant framework for this study.

Media organizations are traditionally considered to be not only profit seeking organizations but also cultural-societal institutions with a mission to inform, educate and/or entertain the audiences – consumers as well as citizens. This is especially true for public service media in distinction with commercial media companies. Comparative studies mainly concentrate on similarities and differences

between public and commercial media in news bulletins on television. We want to shift attention to radio channels instead of television channels and similarities and differences in their behavior on twitter instead of on the screen or in the air. What side of their identity (business or institution) is dominant on the social media platform? And is there a noticeable difference between the public and commercial channels? This study investigates the presence on social network Twitter of public radio channels Studio Brussel and MNM (VRT) and commercial radio channels Q-Music and JOE fm (Medialaan). Why do they twitter and how? How do they interact with their audience? What policy rules do they obey to?

2. Literature review

2.1 Twitter and Journalism

Twitter describes itself as *'a real-time information network that connects [users] to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what [they] find interesting'* (Twitter.com, 2013, May 5). Twitter therefore presents itself as a news oriented network, almost a journalist network. The relation between Twitter and journalism has been analyzed from different perspectives.

First, Twitter is a news gathering tool. While Ahmad (2010) called Twitter a *research tool*, Hermida (2010) defined the micro-blogging network as an *awareness system* to alert journalists to breaking news - from wildfires to terrorist attacks or election protests and results - as well as trends and issues hovering under the news radar. Sourcing Twitter for stories adds to the traditional journalists' sources such as press releases and news agencies. Amateur videos and eyewitness accounts available on social media make 'the citizen' a more prominent news source than ever before. Next to the possibilities in this context such as constancy and speed (Hermida, 2009; Farhi, 2009) or facilitating collective wisdom (Howe, 2008; Surowiecki, 2004; Gillmor, 2004), analysts have pointed out some challenges such as the credibility of information (Castillo, Mendoza, & Poblete, 2011; Tremblay, 2010; Lysak, Cremed, & Wolf, 2012), the threat of information overload (Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd, 2010) or work overload (Bucher, Fieseler, & Suphan, 2013). Other authors have warned against too high expectations. Megan Knight (2012) found a disconnect between the extent to which journalists believe they are relying on social media and the extent to which this is obvious to the readers. In the coverage of the Iranian elections 2009, Knight (2012, p. 61) found that *'sourcing practices of journalists and the traditions of coverage ensure that traditional voices and sources are heard above the crowd'*.

Second, Twitter is a news dissemination tool *'for getting information out quickly'* (Armstrong & Fangfang, 2010, p. 210). The network facilitates the instant and constant dissemination of short

fragments of information (Hermida, 2009). According to Waiske (2013, p. 7), the constant and sustained rate of communication - *'the ability to reach multitudes of dedicated readers in a short time and with pithy bursts of information'* – gives Twitter a clear edge over competing social media tools let alone traditional media. Not only original information (breaking news) can be found on Twitter but also 'echoes' of news stories from traditional media (Castillo, Mendoza, & Poblete, 2011) as well as 'advertisements' promoting these stories (see 2.2). Again some nuances are made. Peter Verweij (2010) looked into the Twitter news flows on the occasion of three plane crashes in 2009 and though he found evidence for the *awareness* function of Twitter, the leap to collective truth-finding was too big a step. The use of Twitter, therefore, does not result automatically and evidently in *ambient journalism* in the definition of Hermida (2009, p. 301): *'value is defined less by each individual fragment of information that may be insignificant on its own or of limited validity, but rather by the combined effect of communication'*. In reality, Twitter often remains limited to a collection of fragments of information.

Third, Twitter facilitates the interaction of journalists with their audiences (Lysak, Cremedas, & Wolf, 2012). According to Farhi (2009), Twitter can be used as a community organization tool for newsrooms. Often this possibility is hailed as the most important quality of Twitter for journalists, changing the one-way traditional news flow into a bidirectional communication enabling journalists to build bonds with readers, viewers or listeners. Transparency between journalists and their audiences has been suggested a treatment for the diagnosed problem that journalism has fallen out of touch with audiences (Lowrey & Woo, 2010). Coget, Yamanchi and Suman (2008) called the internet 'the ultimate connecting tool'. Again, Twitter might be the 'upper ultimate' due to speed and shortness (Waiske, 2013). But theoretical possibilities are not always realized in practice. One means to structure communication on Twitter is the use of hashtags. Page (2012) analyzed the frequency, types and grammatical context of hashtags posted by 'ordinary' Twitter senders as well as corporations and celebrities (among them journalists). She came to the conclusion that *'despite claims that hashtags are 'conversational', 'participatory culture' in Twitter is not evenly distributed'* (p. 199). In contrast, status hierarchies in the offline world are reflected on Twitter. To a similar conclusion came Lee and Jang (2013) in their study of public figures communicating on Twitter with their followers: *'such interaction is most likely to be asymmetrical in nature'* (p. 47). Also Kwak, Lee, Park and Moon (2010) showed in their study that Twitter shows a low level of reciprocity.

2.2 Twitter and marketing

The same angles reappear in the discussion of the relationship between marketing and Twitter: Twitter as a research source for companies, Twitter as a dissemination tool of information (advertisements) and Twitter as a tool for customer communication.

Corporate organizations do strategically monitor their markets and customers. They need to know who their customers are, how they respond to their products and how to adapt communication according to their needs. Twitter then adds a research tool to traditional marketing research instruments such as surveys or focus groups. Besides a research tool, Twitter acts as a new dissemination tool to reach out to their customers. According to Bhanot (2012), Twitter and social media in general are not only one new tool, but '*a genuine game changer for business*' (p. 47). Lis and Berz (2011) show that social media strategies behind publishing products increase purchase probability. First, Social media help to market products in an unobtrusive way consumers do not even identify as advertising. Second, social media help build a brand personality and make the brand more approachable for customers (p. 203). Schultz & Sheffer (2012, p. 97) agree that brand awareness and association create loyal consumers. Brands need to be differentiated and communicated to audiences (Yan, 2011). Social media thus became tools for 'branding': to enable brand exposure, to build greater awareness of the brand, to influence the perceived quality of the brand and to create positive brand associations (satisfaction, trust, attachment, identification) in order to impact on purchase (Yan, 2011; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, 2009).

One means to create exposure on Twitter is the use of hashtags. Hashtags can be used to make a term searchable and therefore enhances visibility. Corporations use their company names, slogans, and product names as hashtags, promoting their company name and field of expertise (Page, 2012). When a hashtag is used with significant frequency, it may be listed in the 'trending topics' sidebar of the Twitter site, which can be considered '*a signal of status and influence*' (Page, 2012, p. 185). Page (2012, p. 199) has called this form of branding a '*strategy of amplification*'. As the visual cue of the brand, however, is greatly lessened on platforms such as Twitter, it is therefore necessary for brands to build a connection with users and fostering a sense of belonging through the engagement itself (Yan, 2011, p. 690) or, in Engeseth's terms (2005), to feel 'one' with the brand. Twitter stimulates viral marketing campaigns and creates buzz (Lin & Peña, 2011). Customers and audiences take over part of the communication initiated by the company. Jansen and colleagues (2009) described microblogging as '*a form of electronic word-of-mouth for sharing consumer opinions concerning brands*'. Light (2014) has called this use of (social) media and journalism skills to promote brands, 'brand journalism': '*Single, repetitive messages are replaced by multi-dimensional messages via multiple channels to multiple audiences*'. Notice the parallel with Hermida's definition of ambient journalism (2009).

Inherent to social media marketing is the interaction with and between customers. More explicitly than in concepts such as social branding or brand journalism, the customer is brought to the forefront in concepts such as customer communication or customer care (Barnes, 2008). Customer care is about being of service to your audience and solving their problems. Customer care exists offline but increasingly online. Twitter, for example, enables companies to communicate with consumers efficiently and deepen relationships with them (Lin & Peña, 2011). The concept of 'relationship marketing' (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 1991) concerns the integration of customer service, quality-management and marketing activity (p. 264). Mini-connections with consumers created through social networking can yield positive effects on brand evaluations and purchase intentions (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012). Not only one-to-one relationships with customers are beneficial to companies but also supportive are 'brand communities', groups of customers and admirers of a brand (Zaglia, 2013). Brand communities established on social media are found to enhance feelings of community among members and have positive effects on engagement, brand use and brand loyalty (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Making use of customer feedback also increases customer involvement and builds customer loyalty (Lis & Berz, 2011, p. 204). Handbooks and guidelines (eg. Sysomos, 2012) point out that it is worth to identify the best customers and most important players in your social media circle and actively engage with them and reward them (with special content, deals, offers,...) as they do a great job in promoting your brand.

2.3 Twitter, journalism, marketing and media organizations

Media organizations are, in the words of Lowry and Woo (2010), part business and part institution: they are *'not only businesses, responding to economic forces; they are also deeply rooted social and cultural institutions'* (p. 42). Tensions between the journalistic and business side of news production resulted in market-driven journalism, increasingly merging journalistic news making with marketing (Siegert, Gerth & Rademacher, 2011). Today's 'overcrowded' media marketplace (McDowell, 2011, p.38) doesn't help to strengthen the institution to the prejudice of the business. News organizations have to respond to increasing competition, say also Kim, Baek and Martin (2010): *'In an environment where different organizations often offer news that is similar, differentiating media brands is necessary for survival'* (p. 117). Branding thus is considered vital. Media organizations often build brands on their well-known anchors. The 'brand personality' (a set of human characteristics associated with a brand - Kim, Baek, & Martin, 2010) is closely bound with the human characteristics of those who deliver the news, such as anchors, reporters and talk show hosts (p. 120). Schultz and Sheffer (2012) mention the 'celebrity culture' in which journalists and news anchors increasingly participate as celebrities. In their study they found that though many reporters are not actively trying

to brand themselves, *'the conditions are ripe for personal branding to take place'* (Schultz & Sheffer, 2012, p. 93).

Branding of media organizations serves the same purpose as branding of organizations in general: making an impact on consumption. Media networks make use of social media to promote on-air programs and transmit program-related information to viewers or listeners to steer traffic to their programs and websites in order to increase audience share (Lin & Peña, 2011). *'Big media brands are learning that most readers are not coming through the "front door" anymore'*, states Cramer (2013, p. 20). Twitter provides viewers with *'an additional access point to the TV-show'* (Yan, 2011, p. 690). In line with this intention to steer traffic to their programs, Lin and Peña (2011) found in their study that *'giving "suggestions"'* (type "Watch the show tonight") is the most frequent television networks' message content on Twitter. In addition, they found that television networks post more positive socioemotional tweets than negative socioemotional tweets as senders are interested in optimizing their self-representation on Twitter and positive emotional messages help brands generate positive attitudes among consumers and lead to more favorable branding outcomes (Lin & Peña, 2011). News, like all media content, is an experience good (Kim, Baek, & Martin, 2010, p. 118) and the experience strived for is 'good'. Media organizations also strive to a good relationship with their audience. Bruns (2012, p. 100) however believes that general organizational accounts are often unable or unwilling to respond effectively to comments and questions received as private or public replies from their followers on Twitter, acting instead as one-directional disseminators of news updates.

3. Method

3.1 Radio channels

In our study, we did not opt for television networks but for the less researched radio networks. In 2014, Belgium celebrated '100 years of radio'. Radio adjusted itself successfully to consecutive changing environments, with the digital reality - including the omnipresent social media - as provisionally last phase (Declercq, 2014). Digitalization signified the end of traditional characteristics of radio (as summed up by McLeish, 2005, for example). The 'blindness' of radio came to an end via live streams and glimpses into the studio. The individual experience was replaced by sharing communities. The linearity and volatility was reduced through the possibility to re-listening; social media prolonged the experience of radio listening as well. Also the passive nature of the medium is reduced due to calls to action and enhanced selectivity of the listener. Radio in Flanders is very much alive. CIM-figures of 2013 (cim.be) show that 77% of Dutch-speaking Belgian inhabitants of 12 years and older listen on a daily basis to radio.

The two main players on the radio (and television) market in Flanders are public service broadcaster VRT (Vlaamse Radio en Televisie Omroep) and commercial broadcaster Medialaan (before 2014: VMMA). Their two main television channels (Eén – VRT and VTM – Medialaan), and especially their 7 p.m. news bulletins, are the focus of numerous comparative studies. Less research attention goes to the radio channels of both media organizations (d’Haenens & Ichau, 2014, xiii-xiv).

The Decree on Radio and Television in Flanders (originally from 27 March 2009, but with numerous amendments up to 2004) (Vlaamse overheid, 2014) recognizes nationwide (that means: for the Flemish Community), regional and local radio broadcasting organizations. The four radio channels in our study, commercial broadcasters JOE fm and Q-Music, as well as public broadcasters Studio Brussel and MNM, are nationwide radio channels. Nationwide radio channels are required by decree (Art. 137) to provide a variety of programs especially with regard to information and entertainment. At least four times a day, they have to provide a news bulletin with a variety of topics (Art. 138). The mission of public service broadcaster VRT is also to reach a maximum number of media users (Art. 6 §2). Needless to say that commercial broadcaster Medialaan doesn’t need a decree assignment to strive for the same goal. Public service broadcaster VRT implements a mixed financial system. Next to government financing, the VRT generates part of its resources from radio advertising, sponsoring, exploitations of programs and derived products (e.g. merchandising). The management contract with the Flemish government imposes a limit on income from radio advertising and (television) sponsoring.

Channel profiling is the rule both at VRT and Medialaan. Each radio channel has its own target audience and program emphasis. Public broadcaster VRT runs five nationwide radio channels. Next to the more general channels Radio 1 (mass audience, news and information), Radio 2 (regional information) and Klara (culture and classical music), both Studio Brussel and MNM focus on youth and stress popular music more than information. Commercial broadcaster Medialaan has two nationwide radio channels, Q-Music and JOE fm. Both channels are oriented towards music and youth as well. Inspired by the choice for the ‘most similar systems design’ we included in our study next to both radio channels of Medialaan (Q-Music and JOE fm), the two radio channels of VRT most similar to them (Studio Brussel and MNM).

Studio Brussel was, back in 1983, the public service broadcaster’s response to the popularity of local radio channels. In April 2013, Studio Brussel celebrated its 30th birthday with a market share of 13.4% (cim.be, 2013). The channel targets 12-24 years old and calls itself ‘*young at heart*’. It focuses on ‘*active and eager listeners*’. Music plays a central role at Studio Brussel, which is demonstrated by its motto ‘*Life is Music*’. In their own words, Studio Brussel ‘*offers contemporary and adventurous music with special attention to the Flemish music business (music productions, clubs, concerts, festivals).*’ (www.vrt.be/en/studio-brussel). Studio Brussel has some well-known anchors (radio celebrities) such as Siska Schoeters, Sam De Bruyn and An Lemmens.

MNM started its broadcasts as the successor of Radio Donna in January 2009. The channel has a market share of 9.74% but in the age group of 12 to 14 years old, MNM achieves a market share of up to 21% (cim.be, 2014). MNM presents itself as *'the VRT's relaxing radio station'*. It clearly focuses on a young target group and offers *'listener sized news and information, social commitment and the promotion of a team spirit'*. Its music attracts young people with today's hits and *'the best of the 80s until now'* (www.vrt.be/en/mnm). Their most famous anchorperson is Peter Van de Veire.

Q-Music started as the first nationwide radio channel of the commercial broadcaster (VMMa at the time, later Medialaan) in November 2001. It quickly became the most popular radio channel in Flanders in the age group 18 to 34 years with a market share of 26.7% (CIM, 2014). The channel presents itself as *'a surprising music channel for everyone who loves music, fun and action'*, summarized in the slogan *"Q is good for you"*. (medialaan.net/radio-advertising/onze-merken/q-music). Also Q-Music boasts its own celebrities with (news) anchors Wim Oosterlinck, Sven Ornelis, Kurt Rogiers, Anke Buckinx and Showbizz Bart.

In 2007, VMMa/Medialaan took commercial radio 4FM under its wings. Two years later the name was changed to JOE fm. The market share (8.46%) (cim.be, 2013) is similar to that of MNM but JOE fm focuses on a slightly older group of 30 to 40 years old. Music plays a central role, expressed in its baseline *"Your greatest hits"* (medialaan.net/radio-advertising/onze-merken/joe-fm). Well-known anchors are Raf Van Brussel, Leen Demaré, Truus Druyts, Tess Goossens and Alexandra Potvin.

Studio Brussel and MNM started to operate on Twitter in 2009, Studio Brussel in 2010 and JOE fm in 2011. According to its digital head Vincent Vangeel, the social medium Facebook is far more important to reach the listeners of JOE fm than is Twitter. The same goes for MNM, according to MNM producer Ruth Degraeve. At the moment of the study in April 2013, Studio Brussel (@stubu) had 158.000 followers on Twitter, Q-Music (@Qmusic_BE) 72.600, MNM (@MNMbe) 63.500 and, finally, JOE fm (@joe_fm) 2.500. Behind the accounts @Qmusic_BE and @joe_fm are hidden two persons who jointly manage both accounts. @StuBru is managed by two persons as well. Behind the account @MNMbe, however, sits the whole team *'from dj's and reporters to producers'*.

How do these channels make use of Twitter: to inform the public about newsworthy events (news dissemination tool) or to inform them about their own brand and products (marketing tool)? Do they, in the words of Lowry and Woo (2012), behave more as 'institutions' or as 'businesses'?

3.2 Method

A multi-method approach was adopted to find an answer to these questions, combining content analysis with expert interviews. The bulk of the research consists of a quantitative content analysis of the tweet output of the general organizational accounts of the four radio channels during a two-week period (1-15 April 2013, extended to 1 February-15 April 2013 for JOE fm due to the low

number of tweets) (N= 1003). To get an idea of the number of tweets posted by the channels per month, the program Tweetstats (www.tweetstats.com) was used. On the basis of these figures, we extended the two-week period (Q-Music, Studio Brussel, MNM) for JOE fm with an extra two months (February and March 2013). Tweets were collected with the program Snapbird (www.snapbird.org). Only the general organizational accounts of the radio channels were studied. Q-Music posted 370 tweets, MNM 180 tweets, and Studio Brussel 281 tweets between April, 1 and April, 15. JOE fm posted in the original two week period only 19 tweets, but in the extended period 172 tweets. The two-week period can be considered a typical sub-universe and every channel had some 'special actions'. Studio Brussel celebrated its 30th birthday on April 1, 2013 with 'Dirty Thirty partyboat'. In the same period also the final of a Flemish talent contest ('*De nieuwe lichting*') took place. Q-Music had '*Wie wordt de nieuwe festivalchick?*' (Who becomes the new festivalchick?). Q-Music sent a female listener to all major Belgian festivals to act as an ambassador of the channel. MNM promoted '*De strafste school van Vlaanderen*' wherein the radio channel organized a search for the most remarkable school in Flanders. JOE fm, at last, had '*de grootste klasreünie ooit*' (the greatest class reunion ever).

The unit of analysis was each individual tweet posted by the network's main twitter account. We analyzed each tweet on the basis of its descriptive information (i.e. date, time, channel) as well as variables such as type of tweet (original tweet, retweet, modified retweet, reply), content of tweet (news facts, promotion of programs, events, contests, calls to action), actors referred to in the tweet (anchors, celebrities, singers,...), the presence or absence of hashtags, links and multimedia materials, the use of colored words, emoticons, capitals and punctuation, the number of retweets and favorites. The codebook contained 36 variables and was loosely inspired by the coding instrument of Castillo, Mendoza and Poblete (2011) and Verweij (2010). The results were analyzed using SPSS version 21.

By definition, content analysis quantifies and analyzes the presence or absence of elements, based on a predetermined set of categories (Krippendorff, 2004). In addition, we conducted open interviews with the heads of the digital media departments and the social media editors - "*the newsroom liaisons to the digital world*" (Waiske, 2013) – of Studio Brussel (VRT), MNM (VRT) and Q-Music/JOE fm (Medialaan). Due to the close cooperation of Q-Music and JOE fm, only one person (Vincent Vangeel) heads the digital media policy of both channels. MNM was represented by producer Ruth Degraeve and Stijn Van Kerkhove spoke for Studio Brussel. The interviews took place on October, 28 and 29, 2013. They were transcribed and coded via the phases of open, axial and selective coding. In this article, the section 'results' is largely confined to the content analysis' results. The findings of the interviews are discussed in confrontation with the results in the 'discussion' section.

4. Results

4.1 Content of tweets

Tweets were coded for the presence or absence of stating own programs (own channel), programs on other channels, news facts (hard and soft news), self-contained amusement (not related to the channels' programs), events and contests organized by the channel or with participation of the channel, and calls to action. Among all tweets (N= 1003), references to the channels' own programs was the most frequent category. In half of the tweets (50%), a radio program of the own channel was referred to. One in four tweets (25%) contained a call to the audience (call to action), often in connection with contests organized by the channel. The category of 'contests' (20.5%), therefore not surprisingly, comes third. News facts were found to be present in (only) 15.6% of tweets whereas events (festivals, parties) were referred to in 15% of tweets. Less important is the dissemination of self-contained amusement such as funny videos and pictures not connected to its programs (5.2%) as well as references to programs on concurrent channels (5.2%) (see Table 1).

Table 1: content of tweets posted by public and commercial radio channels (N= 1003)

	PUBLIC	COMMERCIAL	TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE
OWN PROGRAMS	42.7%	56.1%	50.0%	$X^2= 17.773$, $df=1$, $p=0$
NEWS FACTS	21.0%	10.9%	15.6%	$X^2= 19.562$, $df=1$, $p=0$
OTHER PROGRAMS	6.1%	4.4%	5.2%	$X^2= 1.373$, $df=1$, $p>0.05$
AMUSEMENT	7.8%	3.0%	5.2%	$X^2= 11.956$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$
EVENTS	20.8%	10.0%	15%	$X^2= 23.106$, $df=1$, $p=0$
CONTESTS	16.3%	24.2%	20.5%	$X^2= 9.528$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$
CALLS TO ACTION	22.2%	27.5%	25%	$X^2= 3.746$, $df=1$, $p>0.05$

There is a significant relationship between the type of channel (public or commercial) and the attention to news dissemination (see Table 1). Only 10.9% of tweets posted by commercial channels (Q-Music and JOE fm) contain news facts, in comparison to 21% of tweets posted by public channels (Studio Brussel and MNM). There are, however, significant differences between the individual channels as well (see Table 2). Studio Brussel devotes as much as 28.1% of tweets to news facts, but MNM only 10%. Among the commercial channels, JOE fm reaches 15.1% but Q-Music only 8.9%. Differences between the individual channels are statistically significant ($X^2= 50.404$, $df= 3$, $p= 0$). Strikingly, the channels does not only limit their news output but also their definition of "news". News is largely equated with music related news. Q-Music focuses on music and celebrities. In addition, the radio channel distributes exclusively positive news. JOE fm focuses on music and cultural news (e.g. movies) in general. Studio Brussel, though a public service broadcaster, has no attention to "hard news" either and focuses equally on music. Studio Brussel has a daily program "Popnews" (5.30 p.m.) but also posts updates throughout the day with the hashtag #popnieuws. General news facts (e.g.

American elections) are only present on public television channel MNM. MNM also pays attention to sports (e.g. Ronde van Vlaanderen) and negative news items (e.g. the bombing in Boston).

Table 2: content of tweets posted by Studio Brussel, MNM, JOE fm and Q-Music (N= 1003)

	STUBRU	MNM	JOE FM	Q-MUSIC	TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE
OWN PROGRAMS	39.5%	47.8%	69.2%	50%	50.0%	P= 0
NEWS FACTS	28.1%	10%	15.1%	8.9%	15.6%	P= 0
OTHER PROGRAMS	3.9%	9.4%	3.5%	4.9%	5.2%	P < 0.05
AMUSEMENT	9.6%	5.0%	6.4%	1.4%	5.2%	P= 0
EVENTS	22.1%	18.9%	13.4%	8.4%	15%	P= 0
CONTESTS	15.7%	17.2%	15.7%	28.1%	20.5%	P= 0
CALLS TO ACTION	25.7%	16.7%	39.0%	22.2%	25%	P= 0

All channels use Twitter predominantly in order to promote their own programs. The difference between public (42.7%) and commercial (56.1%) channels is statistically significant ($X^2= 17.773$, $df= 1$, $p= 0$), but also the difference between individual channels ($X^2= 38.068$, $df= 3$, $p= 0$) though both public channels Studio Brussel (39.5%) and MNM (47.8%) score lower on program naming than the commercial broadcasters Q-Music (50%) and JOE fm (69.2%). The data on the time of tweets show that tweeting peaks around (before and during) the channels' major programs such as *Ochtendshow* on MNM or *Ornelis & Vancoillie* on Q-Music. Q-Music even dares to look back on programs though looking back is less popular than announcing the program. Referring to other programs than its own, is done significantly more by MNM (9.4%) than by the three other radio channels. What is more, commercial broadcasters JOE fm and Q-Music as well as public broadcaster Studio Brussel only refer to programs of the same group (respectively Medialaan and VRT) they both radio and television programs, while MNM refers to programs both from VRT and the rival Medialaan.

There seems to emerge a pattern off public broadcasters paying more attention to disjointed amusement and events (which could be called 'news' in a broad sense) and commercial broadcasters preferring contests and calls to action (connected to 'branding'). Differences between the individual channels though are more decisive than differences between broadcaster type. Concerning contests Q-Music (28.1%) stands out. 'Calls to action' is an important category for all channels (on average one to four of all tweets) but JOE fm (39%) clearly heads this category. Events such as festivals and performances are more important for the public channels Studio Brussel (22.1%) and MNM (18,9%)

than for commercial channels JOE fm (13.4%) and Q-Music (8.4%). All channels have a clear preference for self-organized events such as *'The greatest class reunion ever'* on JOE fm, *'The new generation'* and *'Dirty Thirty partyboat'* on Studio Brussel, or the *QParty* on Q-Music. MNM also pays attention to sport events. The channel MNM has a relatively large amount of loose amusement (9.6%) such as funny videos and entertaining tweets, disconnected from the channels' programs. The opposite channel in this area is Q-Music with only 1.4% amusement.

Table 3: the presence of actors on the public and commercial channels (N= 624)

	PUBLIC	COMMERCIAL	TOTAL
GUESTS IN PROGRAMS	2.2%	1.7%	1.9%
FAMOUS PEOPLE	17.6%	9.9%	13.3%
PRESENTERS, ANCHORS	16.2%	40.3%	29.8%
SINGERS, GROUPS	51.8%	27.3%	38%
COMBINATIONS	12.1%	20.7%	17%

($\chi^2 = 68.173$, df= 4, p= 0)

Tweets were also coded for the presence or absence of actors. In six to ten tweets (62.2%) a mention is made of an actor. As is evident in Table 3, especially commercial channels (40.3%) focus on the own radio presenters and anchors in their tweets. This is true for both Q-Music (32.4%) and JOE fm (53.8%) in comparison to public broadcasters Studio Brussel (16.8%) and MNM (15.3%) (see Table 4). Public broadcasters in contrast pay more attention to singers (and groups of singers) (51.8%) and 'famous people' (17.6%) than commercial broadcasters do (27.3% and 9.9% respectively). Singers and groups are especially important to Studio Brussel (59.6%) which may be explained by its daily program 'Popnews'. Famous people, in comparison, are relatively more important to MNM (25.2%) which may be explained by the broader news angle of the channel. Guests (on average 1.9%) are a minor actor mentioned in radio channels' tweets.

Table 4: the presence of actors on Studio Brussel, MNM, JOE fm and Q-Music (N= 624)

	STUBRU	MNM	JOE FM	Q-MUSIC	TOTAL
GUESTS	3.1%	0.9%	0.0%	2.7%	1.9%
FAMOUS PEOPLE	12.4%	25.2%	9.2%	10.4%	13.3%
PRESENTERS	16.8%	15.3%	53.8%	32.4%	29.8%
SINGERS	59.6%	40.5%	17.7%	32.9%	38%
COMBINED	8.1%	18.0%	19.2%	21.6%	17%

($\chi^2 = 109.166$, df= 12, p= 0)

4.2 Type of tweets

For every tweet we encoded de categories ‘original tweet’, ‘retweet’, ‘modified retweet’ and ‘reply’. Retweets occur when a tweet of someone else is forwarded by the main radio accounts to their follower list. Modified retweets are retweets with an additional comment added. A reply is an answer to a message, not necessarily a question, of someone else, directed to the radio channel or to a third party.

Table 5: type of tweets posted by public and commercial radio channels (N= 1003)

	PUBLIC	COMMERCIAL	TOTAL
ORIGINAL TWEET	84.6%	76.8%	80.4%
(MODIFIED) RETWEET	13%	3%	7.6%
REPLY	2.4%	20.3%	12.1%

($\chi^2 = 101.433$, $df=2$, $p=0$)

Of the 1003 tweets, 806 (80.4%) were original posts, 121 (12.1%) were replies, 53 (5.3%) were retweets and 23 (2.3%) were modified retweets. The bulk of the tweets, therefore, are original. This observation applies to all channels though the share of original tweets varies from only 69.2% at Q-Music over 80% at MNM and 87.5% at Studio Brussel to 93% at JOE fm (see Table 6). In general, replies outweigh retweets. On closer inspection, however, there is a significant relationship between the type of transmitter and the choice of reply or retweet (see Table 5). The commercial broadcasters clearly prefer replies above retweets while the public broadcasters prefer retweets above replies.

Table 6: type of tweets posted by Studio Brussel, MNM, JOE fm and Q-Music (N= 1003)

	STUDIO BRUSSEL	MNM	JOE FM	Q-MUSIC	TOTAL
ORIGINAL TWEET	87.5%	80%	93%	69.2%	80.4%
RETWEET	6.4%	17.2%	2.3%	0%	5.3%
MODIFIED RT	2.8%	1.7%	0.6%	3%	2.3%
REPLY	3.2%	1.1%	4.1%	27.8%	12.1%

($\chi^2 = 179.338$, $df=6$, $p=0$)

Q-Music stands out as the most ‘replying’ radio channel: 27.8% of its tweets fall into this category. When the channel retweets, it always opt for the ‘modified retweet’. The three other channels retweet more often without a comment added to the forwarded tweet. To the public

channels Studio Brussel and MNM, the category ‘replies’ is of minor importance. Though JOE fm only posts 4.1% replies, they still outweigh the retweets.

4.3 Constituents of tweets

The tweets were coded for the presence or absence of hashtags, links to the own website or other websites, (links to) videos and pictures, references to other Twitter accounts. All radio channels have in common that they frequently link (38.1% of all tweets) to their own website (see Table 7). There is no significant relationship between type of broadcaster – public (36.2%) versus commercial (39.7%) – and the practice of linking to the own website ($X^2= 1.252$, $df= 1$, $p= 0.263$). Both types do refer to the same extent to their websites. The relationship between the type of broadcaster and the use of hashtags, however, is statistically significant. Commercial broadcasters (49.3%) make use of hashtags more often than public ones (39.3%) ($X^2= 10.078$, $df= 1$, $p= 0.002$). The majority of hashtags refers to the own channels and their programs. Frequently used hashtags on any Twitter account are the names of programs (e.g. #Ochtendshow, #ochtendJOE, #DNL, #iTT30). Q-Music also uses the hashtag “now on Q-Music” (#nuopQ). Studio Brussel groups its music news around the hashtag #popnieuws.

Table 7: use of hashtags, links and references in tweets posted by Studio Brussel, MNM, JOE fm and Q-Music (N= 1003)

	STUBRU	MNM	JOE FM	Q-MUSIC	TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE
HASHTAGS	35.6%	45%	54.1%	47.0%	44.7%	$P<0.05$
OWN WEBSITE	39.1%	31.7%	42.4%	38.4%	38.1%	$p>0.05$
OTHER WEBSITES	27.0%	16.1%	41.9%	10.0%	21.3%	$P=0$
VIDEOS	26.3%	8.9%	22.1%	10.3%	16.6%	$P=0$
PICTURES	24.2%	10.0%	24.4%	3.2%	14%	$P=0$
COMBINATIONS	2.8%	0.6%	5.2%	0.5%	2.0%	$P<0.05$
TWITTER ACCOUNTS	44.5%	48.9%	54.7%	68.6%	55.9%	$P=0$

A significant difference between commercial (64.2%) and public (46.2%) radio channels is also found for the mentions to twitter accounts ($X^2= 32.756$, $df= 1$, $p= 0$) but this last difference can be traced largely to the difference between ‘replies’ and ‘retweets’ on both types (see 4.2). Presenters, anchors and ‘famous people’ are also frequently referred to with their twitter account. For the other constituents, individual channel differences are more important than type differences. Commercial JOE fm, for example, stands out in linking to third party websites (41.9%) while the other commercial

channel, Q-Music (10%) links the least. The inclusion of (music) videos and photos is unevenly scattered among the channels, but indifferently to the type of channel. Photos are mainly used by the channels to give followers a look behind the scenes. They picture the studio, presenters and guests by which they give the radio a face.

4.4 'Tone of voice' of tweets

We counted the number of 'positive' (e.g. 'wonderful', 'Hurray!') and 'negative' (e.g. 'merciless', 'hate') words in the tweets as well as the presence and absence of positive (e.g. '😊') and negative (e.g. ☹️) emoticons, the use of punctuation (?, !), capitals (e.g. 'WOEHOE'), quotation marks and metaphors, and the mention of criticism.

Public (M= 0.38) and commercial (M= 0.34) channels do not differ from one another in the use of positive words ($t= 0.950$, $df= 1001$, $p= 0.342$). The Anova-test with post hoc Bonferroni test, however, revealed differences between the individual channels crossing the different types. Public channel Studio Brussel (M= 0.49) and commercial channel JOE fm (M= 0.45) do not differ significantly from one another. The same applies to public MNM (M= 0.21) and commercial Q-Music (M= 0.05). Both pairs however differ significantly from the channels of the other pair. Studio Brussel and JOE fm use positive words more frequently than do MNM and Q-Music.

Table 8: number of 'positive' words per channel and per type of channel (N= 1003)

	MEAN	SD	MAX	N
STUDIO BRUSSEL	0.49	0.677	3	281
MNM	0.21	0.445	2	180
JOE FM	0.45	0.660	3	172
Q-MUSIC	0.05	0.221	1	370
PUBLIC	0.38	0.612	3	461
COMMERCIAL	0.34	0.599	3	542

The difference between public (M= 0.12) and commercial (M= 0.07) channels concerning the use of negative words is statistically significant ($t= 2.249$, $df= 800.895$, $p= 0.025$). Commercial channels make even less use of negative words than public channels. The Anova test (with Bonferroni ad hoc test) reveals that Studio Brussel (M= 0.18) differs significantly from both MNM (M= 0.02) and Q-Music (M= 0.05) but not from JOE fm (M= 0.11). JOE fm does not differ significantly from any other channel.

Table 9: number of 'negative' words per channel and per type of channel (N= 1003)

	MEAN	SD	MAX	N
STUDIO BRUSSEL	0.18	0.459	3	281
MNM	0.02	0.148	1	180
JOE FM	0.11	0.332	2	172
Q-MUSIC	0.05	0.221	1	370
PUBLIC	0.12	0.378	3	461
COMMERCIAL	0.07	0.263	2	542

The preference for positive language and aversion to negative attitudes is confirmed by other data on language use. Negative emoticons are not used at all, not by public nor by commercial channels. Traces of criticism were not or hardly retrieved. Positive emoticons, however, are not used a lot either. Commercial channels (4.1%) use them more often than public broadcasters (1.1%). The relationship is statistically significant ($X^2 = 8.414$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.004$). Figurative language is not the standard language used in tweets. Public channels (4.6%) do not use metaphors more often than commercial broadcasters (3.3%) ($X^2 = 1.016$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.314$), but public channel Studio Brussel (7.5%) does make use of metaphors significantly more often than the other public channel MNM (0.0%) ($X^2 = 17.431$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$).

Table 10: use of positive and negative emoticons, punctuation, capitals, metaphors, criticism by Studio Brussel, MNM, JOE fm and Q-Music (N= 1003)

	STUBRU	MNM	JOE FM	Q-MUSIC	TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE
POSITIVE EMOTICONS	0.4%	2.2%	1.7%	5.1%	2.7%	P=0.002
NEGATIVE EMOTICONS	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-
"?"	21%	23.3%	41.3%	22.2%	25.3%	P= 0
"!"	45.6%	38.9%	38.4%	53.5%	46.1%	P=0.001
CAPITALS	3.9%	2.2%	4.1%	2.2%	3.0%	p>0.05
METAPHOR	7.5%	0.0%	3.5%	3.2%	3.9%	P= 0.001
" "	14.6%	13.9%	1.2%	6.5%	9.2%	P= 0
CRITICISM	1.4%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	-

Punctuation is more widely used with exclamation marks (46.1%) more common than question marks (25.3%). Both question marks and exclamation marks are used in calls to action (e.g. 'Take part!', 'You want to take part?'); exclamation marks are also used to express enthusiasm (e.g. 'Yes!'). The

difference between type of channel and use of the exclamation mark (43% of tweets of public channels, 48.7% of tweets of commercial channels) is not statistically significant ($X^2 = 3.325$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.068$). The relationship between use of the question mark and the type of channel (21.9% of tweets of public channels and 28.2% of tweets of commercial channels) however is significant ($X^2 = 5.261$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.022$). JOE fm in particular (41.3%) stands out in using the question mark in its tweets. Quotation marks, at last, are used more often by public channels (14.3%) than by commercial ones (4.8%) ($X^2 = 27.098$, $df = 1$, $p = 0$).

4.5 Popularity of tweets

We counted the number of times a tweet was retweeted and the number of times a tweet has been designated as a favorite. Tweets of public radio channels (Studio Brussel and MNM) were retweeted on average 4.48 times in comparison to tweets of commercial radio channels (JOE fm and Q-Music) which were retweeted on average 0.89 times. An independent samples t-test ($t = 4.969$, $df = 472.337$, $p = 0$) revealed that the mean difference is statistically significant. We also conducted an Anova-test with post hoc Bonferroni test which revealed that both public broadcasters do not significantly differ from one another and neither do the commercial channels.

Table 11: number of retweets per channel and per type of channel (N= 1003)

	MEAN	SD	MAX	N
STUDIO BRUSSEL	3.49	4.075	23	281
MNM	6.01	24.036	228	180
JOE FM	0.31	0.533	3	172
Q-MUSIC	1.17	2.257	20	370
PUBLIC	4.48	15.377	228	461
COMMERCIAL	0.89	1.930	20	542

Tweets of public radio channels were also more frequently designated as favorite ($M = 5.10$) than tweets of commercial radio channels ($M = 0.64$). An independent samples t-test ($t = 13.506$, $df = 489$, $p = 0$) revealed that the mean difference is statistically significant. In addition, the Anova-test with post hoc Bonferroni test revealed a significant mean difference between public broadcasters Studio Brussel ($M = 6.73$) and MNM ($M = 2.56$). The commercial broadcasters JOE fm ($M = 0.09$) and Q-Music ($M = 0.90$) do not significantly differ from one another but they do differ from both Studio Brussel and MNM.

Table 12: number of favorites per channel and per type of channel (N= 1003)

	MEAN	SD	MAX	N
STUDIO BRUSSEL	6.73	5.712	34	281
MNM	2.56	7.978	91	180
JOE FM	0.09	0.346	2	172
Q-MUSIC	0.90	1.544	9	370
PUBLIC	5.10	6.984	91	461
COMMERCIAL	0.64	1.344	9	542

5. Discussion

5.1 Why do the radio channels tweet?

All channels in the study present themselves on Twitter more as “businesses” than as “institutions” (Lowry and Woo, 2010). Branding and marketing goals outweigh news dissemination: in half of all tweets a radio program of the own channel was referred to while news facts were found to be present in only one to six tweets. In short, Twitter became the new program guide: teasing the audience, promoting the programs, and extending their lifespan. Not surprisingly, the main twitter accounts post their tweets mainly around (this is before and during) the radio programs.

All channels use Twitter predominantly in order to promote their own programs but commercial channels do it significantly more than public ones. The former also use hashtags significantly more often than the latter. One to two tweets posted by commercial radio channels Q-Music and JOE fm contains a hashtag, usually a program name (e.g. #ochtendJOE, #ITT30). Hashtags promote the visibility of the programs and by implication the visibility of the transmitter (Page, 2012, p. 181). Q-Music (e.g. #foute128), MNM (e.g. #vertaaldelyrics) and Studio Brussel (e.g. #vandejaren90, #deafrekening) have reached with their hashtags already the list of *trending topics* in Belgium which can be considered a signal of status and influence (Page, 2012, p. 185). As Page (2012, p. 199) states: *‘This form of branding [use of hashtags] is clearly in line with the discourse of marketing, which use strategies of amplification to promote commodities.’* Another tool for branding is the use of presenters and anchors (Kim, Baek & Martin, 2010). Again, especially the commercial stations Q-Music and JOE fm play their personalities. Four to ten tweets of commercial channels mention the radio presenters which is double that of public channels. Photos of studio activity serve the same goal: *“to show people what we are doing and to show that it is amusing”* (Vincent Vangeel, Q-Music/JOE fm).

In linking to the own website, public and commercial radio channels are each other’s equals. More than one to three tweets aspires to generate traffic to the website. This finding is consistent with the motivations to tweet, as expressed in the interviews by social media editors. *“We find that people no longer easily found their way to our website, so (...) we exported our content to places where people*

do sit like Facebook and Twitter” says Stijn Van Kerkhove (Studio Brussel). Ruth Degraeve (MNM) calls Twitter “*an additional access point*” by analogy with the concept of Yan (2011). Both Degraeve (MNM) and Vangeel (Q-Music/JOE fm) see higher numbers of visitors to the site through Twitter.

5.2 How do the radio channels tweet?

In line with the aim of using Twitter for branding, the tone of voice is very optimistic. Media products are experience goods (Lis & Berz, 2011) and the experience pursued is evidently a positive one. “*The tone of our tweets is very cheerful, very positive (...) sometimes we even think that we are too positive*” says Vangeel (Q-Music/JOE fm). That shows itself for example in the fact that Q/JOE does not give reviews of artists that they do not consider ‘good’. Van Kerkhove (Studio Brussel) agrees: “*we avoid to release negative things.*” Their statements are confirmed by the results of the analysis, which are in line with earlier studies on television (e.g. Lin & Peña, 2011). The channels keep away from negativism and criticism (e.g. absence of negative emoticons, absence of criticism). Commercial channels make use of negative words even less than public channels, but use positive emoticons (smileys) more often. Exclamation marks are used in half of the tweets to express enthusiasm. In general, the language used is quite straightforward. Metaphors and figurative language are avoided because it might cause confusion or misunderstanding. Videos and pictures are used to increase the attractiveness of tweets. All interviewees agree that the ‘social media voice’ has to equal the ‘radio voice’. Both are strikingly positive.

Written policy documents (do’s and don’ts) do exist within VRT and Medialaan only for television. Radio is left to the parties concerned. Only radio channel MNM has made a written policy document of its own with detailed instructions of ‘how to twitter’. The document stipulates how much and how frequently they post, what topics are covered, what voice of tone is used, what type of videos and photos are used, and so on. The document is felt to be necessary because everyone of MNM ‘*from dj’s and reporters to producers*’ (Ruth Degraeve) post tweets. On the other channels, only two persons manage the twitter account in close consultation. Oral agreements are considered sufficient to them. Behavior on twitter, it appears, depends on individuals rather than on organizations or organizational policy, with formal rules less developed for radio than for television.

5.3 How do the radio channels interact with their audience on Twitter?

The ‘call to action’ is an important category for all channels. On average one to four of all tweets falls into this category (e.g. ask listeners for their opinion, incite them to listen to a program or encourage participation in a contest) with no significant difference between public and commercial channels. JOE fm however, stands out as the champion in ‘calling’. Likewise JOE fm stands out in using the question mark in its tweets. Next to the question mark, calls to action make use of the imperative

as well. Q-Music, for example, prefers the exclamation mark above the question mark to encourage the followers to action while Studio Brussel and MNM tend to prefer the question mark.

Two to ten tweets fall into the categories of (modified) retweet or reply which can be considered two ways to communicate with the audience. There is a clear link between the preference for one or the other and the type of channel. The commercial broadcasters JOE fm and especially Q-Music prefer replies above retweets while the public broadcasters Studio Brussel and MNM prefer retweets above replies. The reason why public broadcasters opt for retweeting instead of replying seems motivated by negative selection. According to Van Kerkhove, Studio Brussel gets so many responses to a tweet that it is impossible to respond anywhere. MNM does not answer all the questions systematically but *“only the decent questions”* (Ruth Degraeve). Retweeting, then, is a valid alternative to replying. Studio Brussel chooses to retweet or ‘favorite’ a tweet, because *“it is less time-consuming.”* What is important is to give the listener the feeling that he is appreciated. MNM describes retweeting as *“a form of appreciation which the follower interpret as ‘MNM finds my opinion important’”*. The commercial channels Q-Music and JOE fm make a positive choice for replying instead of retweeting. : *“Our goal is to answer everyone within 4 hours. Sometimes I only send a smiley back to still give people the feeling that their tweet is important.”* says Vincent Vangeel. Customer care (Barnes, 2008) is thus more taken to heart by the commercial broadcasting than in public broadcasting.

When Q-Music retweets, it always opt for the ‘modified retweet’ in contrast to the three other channels who retweet more often without a comment added to the forwarded tweet. In the terminology of Boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010) Q-Music is clearly an “adapter”, the three other channels are “preservers”. “Preservers” maintain the original intent, context, and content when retweeting while “adapters” are willing to remove various parts of the tweet to suit their own purposes. They tend to write their own text that paraphrases the original tweet or they keep, for example, the link and remove some or all of the comments. *‘In editing, a retweeter can change the intellectual ownership of the substantive content of the message, and retweeters sometimes serve more as “authors” of ideas than “curators” of others’ work’* according to Boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010, p. 5). Q-Music clearly wants to maintain the power relationship (Page, 2012, p. 198): *“It is important that our own avatar is visible in tweets, if we just retweet, it’s their picture that accompanies the tweet.”* (Vincent Vangeel).

Twitter is also mentioned as a research tool, or a mere instrument of market research: *“For us, social media are a source of inspiration for our programs. It enables us to see what’s going on, what the listeners are interested in, what works, and what does not work properly.”* (Vincent Vangeel). Vangeel explicitly compares the social media of today to the user and listen panels of the past.

5.4 How are the radio channels’ tweets appreciated by the audience?

At the moment of the study in April 2013, Studio Brussel (@stubru) had 158.000 followers on Twitter, Q-Music (@Qmusic_BE) 72.600, MNM (@MNMbe) 63.500 and, finally, JOE fm (@joe_fm) 2.500. According to the number of followers, Studio Brussel appears as the most popular network. Visibility on Twitter, however, depends not only on the number of followers. An important factor is also the further dissemination (retweeting) of the messages originating from the account (Bruns, 2012, p. 100). Retweets are driven by the content value of the tweet, say Lin and Peña (2011), and retweeting can be considered an indicator of popularity and influence (p. 25). In this area, the public radio stations are more successful than their commercial rivals. Tweets of public radio channels Studio Brussel and MNM are retweeted on average 4.48 times in comparison to tweets of commercial radio channels JOE fm and Q-Music which were retweeted on average 0.89 times. One element of explanation for this popularity is the own 'retweet-behavior' of the channels. The commercial channels do not retweet themselves, but the public channels frequently retweet messages from 'famous people', provoking new retweeting. An example: MNM retweets a tweet from Gers Pardoel, a Dutch singer. The tweet was retweeted 222 times. This way, MNM benefits from the notoriety of the Dutch singer. Tweets of public radio channels were also more frequently designated as favorite ($M = 5.10$) than tweets of commercial radio channels ($M = 0.64$). Studio Brussel stands out as the most 'liked' channel judging from the number of favorited tweets.

6. Concluding note

The findings of the content analysis and interviews show similarities but also differences between the different radio channels. All channels are in accord in using Twitter mainly for marketing reasons (e.g. promoting own programs, linking to own website, calls to action, positive tone of voice) rather than news dissemination. Some findings (e.g. audience interaction, radio personalities, use of hashtags) give proof to a fault line between public service broadcasting and commercial broadcasting but as often this line is crossed by even larger differences between individual channels (e.g. individual accents and profiling). Behavior on twitter depends on individuals rather than on organizations or organizational policy, with formal rules less developed for radio than for television.

Our research is limited to the main twitter accounts of the four radio channels Studio Brussel, MNM, Q-Music and JOE fm in Flanders. We cannot conclude anything about individual journalists working for these channels and their behavior on Twitter. As for the media organizations we can conclude that their tweets are the expression of a hybrid form of journalism and marketing in which marketing goals prevail.

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